

I. List 3-5 Student Learning Outcomes for students enrolled in your program.

These should be broad overarching learning goals. They are bigger than objectives.

Department Goals- Institutional)

- I. Coordinate Basic Skills reading and writing and English composition programs.
- II. Coordinate basic math and English programs with innovative and flexible curricula.
- III. Offer innovative and flexible scheduling to meet the changing needs of our students.
- IV. Clearly articulate assessment practices and tools that evaluate learning styles.
- V. Establish a coordinated system of student service and formal mechanisms (with checks along the way) for under-prepared students that will ensure student success.
- VI. Coordinate programs, courses, and activities for developing the independence and confidence required to succeed within the college environment.
- VII. Maintain institutional recognition of and support for sufficient staffing to address the more intensive interactive requirement of working with basic skills students.
- VIII. Fully staff and equip state-of-the-art basic skills labs.
- IX. Provide professional development opportunities for faculty to be informed about changes and innovations in the field.
- X. Develop hybrid and Internet courses that will support basic skills instruction.

Department Goals for Student Learning: To provide educational opportunities for students to:

- ~ read and write at a college-entry level as articulated by State standards
- ~ navigate the college system and develop appropriate academic behavior
- ~ develop the skills and behavior patterns expected in the workforce
- ~ build a foundation of language abilities and interpersonal skills with which they can gain new job skills and obtain higher paying jobs.

More specifically, all courses in the English Skills program will support critical thinking and appropriate academic behavior by insuring that the students meet the following outcomes.

Program Level Critical Thinking - Student Learning Outcomes

In our department, students approach problem solving in ALL reading classes by

- ~ using context clues to find meanings of unfamiliar words
- ~ identifying and explaining key ideas
- ~ identifying and listing appropriate supporting ideas
- ~ recognizing implied main ideas
- ~ understanding relationships that involve addition, time comparison, contrast, cause and effect, and examples
- ~ distinguishing between facts and opinions

in ALL writing by

- ~ supporting a main idea with concrete and logical support
- ~ using a variety of writing strategies to support an idea
- ~ using a variety of sentence types to accomplish tasks

Program level Behavioral - Student Learning Outcomes. Because our students tend to be academically at risk, we incorporate strategies to help them take personal responsibility for their learning. In our department students learn to navigate the college system, develop appropriate academic and develop the skills and behavior patterns expected in the workforce by:

- ~ Attending all classes promptly and as scheduled.
- ~ Demonstrating appropriate classroom behavior.
- ~ Bringing text books and study material to class.
- ~ Keeping records of their progress.
- ~ Turning in presentable academic assignments on time.
- ~ Scheduling time so that they are prepared for each class.
- ~ Using the lab services.
- ~ Seeking the instructor in the lab and during office hours
- ~ Using academic support services appropriately

II. Align the Program Level SLOs with the College Goals.

Briefly discuss how your program meets the goals of the college.

College of Marin's Mission Statement, adopted in March 2005, includes the following:

"The College of Marin's mission is to provide educational opportunities for all students and community members, preparation for transfer to four year schools and universities, workforce education [and] basic skills improvement."

In its vision statement, adopted in the same year, the College states:

The College of Marin provides excellent academic programs and comprehensive services that inspire and support Basic Skills students to achieve their educational and career goals.

Among COM's goals, as listed in the 2006-07 schedule, are the following:

2. Develop and maintain supportive learning environment where individuals will be most likely to fulfill their personal and professional goals and expectations.
3. Respond to changing demographics and community need by incorporating flexibility into scheduling, facilities usage, curriculum development and faculty assignment.
5. Identify and address workforce development needs.
6. Investigate our institutional and instructional performance by continually gathering and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data.
7. Develop and implement sound and coordinated planning process, utilizing data gathered through Program Review and other data sources, to support institutional, instructional support service goals, and to promote achievement of student learning outcomes.

In accordance with this Mission, this Vision, and these goals, the English Skills Discipline established the department level critical thinking and behavioral SLO's above. Every class in the English Skills discipline has specific SLO's directed to achieve the more general departmental SLO's. These specific-to-course SLO's can be found in the expanded Program Review, Appendix B. Course level SLO's are examined every semester by the discipline faculty and the results are used to adjust curriculum and teaching methods.

II. Assess the student success in your program.

How do you know students learned the core SLOs by the completion of curriculum/program. Include data to support these findings.

How does the English Skills Discipline know that the students learned the core SLO's?

Critical Thinking:

- All students in all courses are pre and post tested in specific skills using diagnostic tests accompanying each text.
- Students in the 6 unit reading/writing courses are pre and post tested in grammar (using McGraw-Hill's "sentence skills" diagnostic test), in writing (using a department designed writing rubric based on the English sequence matrix), and in reading (using Townsend Reading Analysis).

Behavioral.

- ~ Three times a semester, (first week, mid-term, final) Students analyze their process toward developing successful college study skills using a discipline-developed rubric.
- ~ At mid-term, teachers also analyze each student's progress using the same rubric.
- ~ Students and teachers discuss the progress in teacher-student meetings and in class discussions.

Include data to support these findings

See discussion below and in the expanded Program Review pages 32 - 37.

IV. Document student success/achievement in the program.

Possible documentation materials might include Degrees, Awards, Transfer, Portfolios, Capstone Assignments, Success in Job Placement, etc.)

In basic skills course, we measure student success and achievement through retention, skills acquisition (success), progress to next level, and persistence toward highest level English.

Retention: (specific chart on page 34 of expanded Program Review)

The overall retention rate for English Skills students is very high -73% in the Fall of 2005 and 76% the Spring of 2006. (For teacher-directed classes the retention rate is about 78%. For self-paced lab courses, the retention rate is about 70%)

This is excellent news because studies show that people who complete even a little college, who are retained for even one semester, will have, for a lifetime, a sizably better income than those who have no college at all. (up to \$10,000 a year, according to a 6007 Chronicle study.)

Furthermore, a total retention rate that hovers about 75% is significantly above the retention rate for remedial classes throughout the state. According to the Chancellor's office, California's retention rate for students in developmental classes is 60%, so we are doing very well. Our intention is to continue to do better. The retention rate for transfer level courses throughout California is 83.3% and the retention rate for transfer level courses at College of Marin is 87.6 %.

Skills acquisition - Successful Course Completions (See details and specific chart on pages 35 and 36 of the expanded Program Review.)

The College, and the state Chancellor's office, define the success rate as the percent of students who completed a course and earned passing grades (A,B,C, or CR). The overall success rate for credit English Skills classes - English 12 through 17, English 62, English 92 and English 116 - is 60%. (F-05 60%, S-06 60.5%). This must take into account that our lowest level developmental English level is four (!) semesters below freshman English. It is well known that the fewer skills students have when they attempt college, the less likely they are to proceed. However, over 70% of students entering, at English 92 (3 semesters below college English) earn passing grades. The College of Marin success rate is 71%; the success rate, statewide, is 66%. The national success rate is 50%.

Our success rate for our one-unit lab courses is about the same as the state average for self-paced labs and distance learning. About 50% of our lab students receive passing grades.(F05 -47%, S06-52%). Furthermore, The English Skills Lab courses are "open entry" and "self-paced". This means that some students receive an "In

Progress" grade and finish the course the following semester. In Fall 05, 19 students received a grade of IP. In Spring 06, 38 students received an IP.

Persistence

Cohort study 2001 - 2006 (See complete details of cohort study on pages 36-38 of expanded Program Review)

English Student Cohort Study: Fall 2001 through Fall 2006

A five-year cohort study, provided by the College of Marin Office of Institutional Research, of 139 students who enrolled in English 92 in the fall 2001 reveals that 20 students or 22% of the original cohort went on to pass English 120, the level of English required for an Associate's Degree at the College. Of those 20 students, 17 went on to pass the transfer-level English 150; and of those 17, 13 more went on to English 151. 11 of those students passed that course.

Although the total number of students in this cohort who completed the full English sequence is small, what is significant is that the pass rates for each course become increasingly larger as students continue on in the English sequence. Notably, the pass rates for this cohort in English 150 and 151 are 89 and 85 percent respectively. Moreover, students from this cohort who entered English 120, 150, and 151, were ten-times more likely to complete the course; there being only one student in this cohort who withdrew from any of the college-level courses, as compared to ten students who withdrew each in English 92 and 98. This appears to indicate that those students, who do enter the sequence at English 92 and are able to pass English 120, are well-prepared to succeed in transfer-level courses.

V. Note areas for future improvement.

Address needs of program like curricular innovation, resource allocation, upgrading facilities, technology, unit allocation, staffing, etc.

Retention Problems

A 75% retention rate is good news, finally, because retention of students was a major goal of the discipline in its 2003 review. In 2003, retention rarely rose above 63%. In response to this number, members of the English Skills Discipline, launched the College Success Council, an ad hoc group of students, teachers, librarians, counselors and Board members, administrators, and college staff members, whose goal was to integrate support services for students at risk. The Council was able to provide students with holistic support and our retention soared. Unfortunately the Council was unable to achieve institutional support and withered. While disappointed, the volunteers who created the Council hope that the new Basic Skills Initiative will recreate the "whole student" support that at-risks students must have. For 30 years, study after study insist that students entering college at a developmental level have only a small chance of getting a bachelor's degree; however, the English Skills teachers at the College of Marin are determined to make sure our developmental students are among the successful.

The most pressing retention concern is with the retention in the self-placed skills courses. The English Skills faculty intended to make that a priority in their Spring 2008 discussions.

Persistence Problems

English Skills students seem to do well in the Basic Skills program but seem to run into trouble as they attempt to move up the ladder toward transfer-level English. The areas of concern are:

- ~ The relatively low pass rates (compared to English 150 and 151);
- ~ The relatively low retention rates between English 92 and 98, and between English 98 and English 120.
- ~ The relatively high rates of withdraws from English 92 and especially English 98.

The pass rates for English 92 and 98 in this cohort are in line or better than State averages. This again is good news in that it indicates that our student learning outcomes for English basic skills courses are within expected ranges. The English Basic Skills Program, however, will be looking into developing research to better determine why those students who pass English 92 and/or English 98 do not enroll in the next course in the English sequence; and why students withdraw from these courses. We know that under-prepared students are more likely to drop out, take more time to complete their educations, and in general tend to have more personal problems that keep them from succeeding in an academic setting. We hope that our research will be able to pinpoint some specific problems that we will be able to address on departmental and institutional levels that will help to increase the rates of students who continue in the English sequence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

WE HAVE RECOMMENDED TO THE IPC AND TO THE BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVE COMMITTEE THAT THE COLLEGE PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THESE STUDENTS BY:

1. Combining English Skills/Developmental English and ESL into one department, with one chair calling the new department, the "College Skills Department".
2. Combining the English Skills and ESL labs into two sections of one room (LC 120) providing coordinator/faculty oversight for the ESL section.
3. Creating a "joint commission" of developmental course teachers to articulate the developmental series (English 62, 92, 98, 120)
4. Enhancing and supporting the college's GED program
5. Convening a group of faculty to review course content and methods of instruction for the single skill, open-entry basic skills courses.
6. Assigning developmental representatives to the committee adjusting the Accuplacer test.
7. Hiring a full-time reading specialist with experience and training in developmental education and learning lab supervision/development
8. Providing training for developmental teachers in developmental reading.
9. Reassigning a personal/crisis counselor (or hire a personal/crisis counselor) with training in developmental

and ESL education.

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